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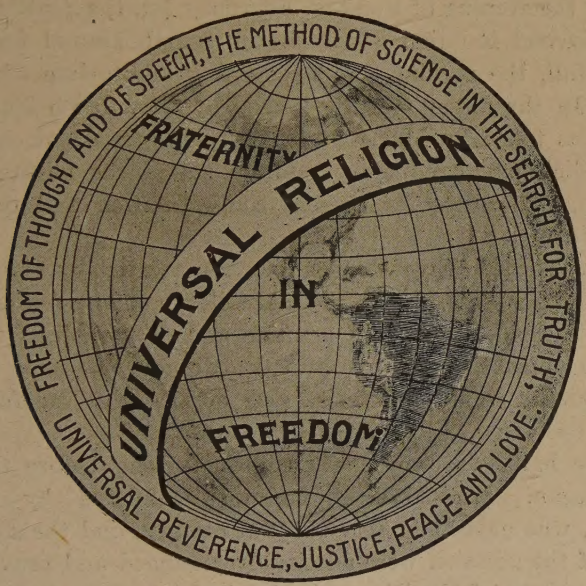
FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND OF SPEECH, THE METHOD OF SCIENCE IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH;
FRATERNITY
UNIVERSAL RELIGION
IN
FREEDOM
UNIVERSAL REVERENCE, JUSTICE, PEACE AND LOVE.

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FOURTH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE SEATTLE SOCIETY FOR UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

On the evening of Sunday, February 1st, the Seattle Society for Universal Religion celebrated its fourth annual festival in Elks' Hall, the regular Sunday evening auditorium of the Society. In the absence of the president, Mr. Jacob Furth, the chair was taken by Mr. John Arthur, vice-president, who in a most felicitous introductory address stated the nature of the occasion, the causes for present congratulation and the hopes of the future.

The Tacoma Free Church was represented by eight of its members, including Mr. F. M. Caldwell, who expressed on behalf of the Tacoma Society the genuine and deep interest taken in the development of our cause in Seattle, and the hope that the two Societies would find increasing opportunity for fellowship and co-operation.

The hall was crowded to the doors long before the exercises began. Musical selections were rendered by talented friends, who gave their services gratuitously, and the social features of the occasion were admirably arranged and provided for by the officers of the Woman's Union. A report of the various addresses follows:

Address of John R. Parker.

The discourses of our minister are excellent and of great value. It has required study, research and great ability to produce them. They are already a feature of our city. Seattle is a better place to live in by reason of those lectures. If they should be discontinued it would be a distinct loss to our people. As our city grows in population and increases in commercial importance, it should also grow intellectually and morally. Higher standards should be evolved in social relations, in business, in

public affairs, and in all matters that are relevant to the welfare of our people.

There is greater responsibility incident to life in a city than to life in the country. In the city there are more difficult problems to be met and solved, and more depending on their correct solution. Seattle has not yet come to the difficulties of a great metropolis, but is fast approaching that condition when all the troubles of a great city will be upon her, when the higher life will be necessary to offset or balance the lower life.

While living in Chicago I heard Dr. Thomas, Robert Collyer, Prof. Swing, Dr. Savage and Rabbi Hirsch. All these are high class men, men of great intellectual, moral and spiritual endowments, great speakers and great thinkers, but I have never heard any series of lectures superior to those I have heard in this Society and in this hall. This Society for Universal Religion established by the efforts of our minister should be the nucleus of a large and successful society, whose influence should be felt throughout the coast.

Chicago is a great intellectual city. It is true all classes are there. The under world is in evidence and so is the upper world. She has schools, colleges and libraries, parks and boulevards of surpassing beauty, wealth and enterprise, but the best thing that can be said of this great city is that her people have been loyal to their great men. It would be good policy for Seattle to follow the example of Chicago in respect to her great men.

This movement is not widely variant from what might be called corresponding movements in Chicago, and in other cities, so far as my personal knowledge extends, though it is not identical with these. That which is reasonable and natural is becoming more and more a factor in the religion of the people, if not of the churches, and to that extent these movements are the same. This movement has individuality and merit not possessed by some of the others. If I understand this movement correctly, it is suggestive of a mode of procedure in truth-seeking such as has been employed in the investigation of all other matters where valuable results have been accomplished. In short, it means this: the discovery of religious truth by the method of science, by the

only method through which anything of value has ever been discovered.

This movement is not committed to any formula or statement of alleged truth. Truth in the abstract is something with which we have nothing to do, and for which we are in no way responsible, nor are we the custodians of truth, nor is any man or organization the custodian thereof, nor does truth need our care or protection. Truth is immutable, unchangeable and eternal. Nature is the source of truth, and reason the open sesame to this great storehouse of knowledge. To discover truth is the highest mission of humanity, but truth of itself is of little value. In activity, in seeking truth lies the greater good. Study and research, particularly in original fields, strengthens the mind and exalts the character. Men have spent their lives in seeking truth and have become cultured, refined and ennobled, not so much because they have added something to human knowledge, but by reason of their efforts in seeking truth. These men are the saviors and leaders of the race. But for them, we, if living at all, would be living in the jungles, the forests, the deserts, the mountains, among the rocks, and upon the undeveloped resources of nature.

There is need of a movement of this kind in Seattle, and everywhere. The objection that this movement seeks to tear down something without putting anything in its place is not well taken. If what you do is founded upon reason, that which you misplace is unreasonable, unnatural, untrue, and of no value. This is not a destructive, but a discriminating movement. It seeks to separate the reasonable from the unreasonable, the natural from the unnatural, the true from the false, the wheat from the chaff.

There is nothing of any value in any system of religion or of any system whatsoever that "transcends" the power of reason. Jesus said, among other things, "Love one another. Love your enemies. Do good to those who misuse you" and "do as you would be done by." All these precepts are divine, but they are only right reason. We know they are true. They need no miracle to authenticate them, no more than pure gold needs to

be authenticated by miracles. Miracles could not make the divine law of love more divine, nor the golden rule more golden.

The greatest fallacy that has ever cursed the world is the assumption that there are two kinds of truth, the religious or sacred, and the secular or profane. All truth is sacred. A truth in mathematics or mechanics is as sacred as anything that was ever proclaimed from a pulpit, and much more sacred than much that is called religious truth that is not true at all. Truth cannot be segregated. It may be likened to the light of the sun, which is always the same. The morning dawn and the evening twilight are identical with the noonday glow, when all the world seems to be flooded with dazzling light. It is one in substance, and all divine.

Address of Rabbi Theodore F. Joseph.

The past week has been full of memorable and momentous anniversaries. On the 26th there was the anniversary of Queen Victoria and of John Ruskin, on the 27th the anniversary of the German Emperor, on the 28th Robert Burns' birthday was celebrated, and on the 29th the anniversary of the birth of the late lamented McKinley evoked spontaneous eulogies throughout the length and breadth of the land. But important as these anniversaries are, they sink into secondary significance tonight, when we are assembled to commemorate the third anniversary of the founding of this society. Tonight the speakers will address not only born Universalists, but also converted ones. These have left their old flag because of the sage and successful missionary labors of the presiding minister. Now, Mr. Martin has not been in the baptismal business, for he would not find many applicants if he were to adhere to the traditional mode of conversion, just at this time of the year. He has increased the number of his followers in quite another way. If I may use a term from the vocabulary of the druggist, he has taken a little Buddhism, a little Brahmanism, a little Shintoism, a little Mosaism, a little of the gospel preached by the gentle rabbi of Nazareth, he has added his own individual flavor, Martinism, and he has prepared it all so deli-

ciously that he could dispense with the external label, "Shake well before using." The large sale which this compound has enjoyed, indicates convincingly its popularity and sweetness.

If I understood the objects of the society correctly, I believe its first and highest aim is the search for truth. Wherever the thistle of prejudice, the thorn of bigotry has flourished, there the hand of Martin has been applied to uproot the poisonous or pernicious weed and plant instead the flower of freedom and liberalism. The second aim or *raison d' etre* of this broad movement has been directed to the establishment of the absolute unity of religion. This unity of religion pre-supposes the larger unity of mankind. This fact is clearly corroborated by the sciences of ethnology and anthropology. All over the world, in regions the most widely separated and among peoples at present most unlike are heard the same tales and the same stories. The Alaskan Indian mother crooons the same lullaby as does her sister on the torrid desert of Arabia. The savage child inhabiting the coral reefs of King Solomon Islands or the inhospitable district of Thibet plays the same game as does its little brother on the Arctic steppes of Siberia. If this fundamental unity of the human family has been thus lucidly demonstrated, then the cardinal unity of the religion professed by mankind is the succeeding and the superior step to be reached. This exalted step Brother Martin is trying to bring home to you. His work is unique in our city and deserves the undivided allegiance of every truth-loving man and of every broadminded woman in Seattle.

The other day I read of a new People's Church that was dedicated in St. Paul. The cost for one window was paid by the Presbyterians, the expense for a second was paid by the Baptists, a third one was donated by the Jews, a fourth one was presented by the Methodists (of course the Methodists can afford it very nicely; they are almost wealthy enough to form a trust and buy out some other denominations).

Now I want to congratulate the officers and members of the Society for Universal Religion upon the positive progress you have attained during the brief period of your existence, and to wish you good luck for the coming year, and add that whenever

you are ready to move from Martin's (Elks') Hall to Martin's Church, upon whose entrance there will be inscribed the golden words of the biblical preacher of universalism, "My house shall become a house of prayer for all nations," you can confidently accept the assurance that you will find my people not to be last to help you realize your precious dreams and cherished ideals both with their hand and with their heart.

ADDRESS BY MRS. WM. B. FRASER.

When Mr. Martin asked me two weeks ago if I would deliver a brief address on our movement from a woman's standpoint, imagine my feelings, having just listened to his masterly discourse on "Who Are the Real Infidels?" To appreciate our movement, a woman should have been born fifty years ago and lived where orthodoxy was the predominant religion.

I go back in thought to my early impressions of a personal man-like God and a personal Devil, exciting fear and stultifying reason. In those days the Devil was the lever of the church to lift man to a higher plane, holding with the poet, "Hell's the hangman's whip that hauds the wretch in order." Compared with that epoch and its religion, this modern movement, which has sloughed off all the traditional superstitions and dogmas, is certainly the milennium.

This movement accepts truth from the Vedas as from Voltaire, from the Pitakas as from Paine, and from every ancient or modern source, regardless of authorities and sanctions. Some of us here can remember the reception accorded to Darwin's discovery and how little we dared to discuss it openly. We can recall, too, the vilifications heaped on Thomas Paine, culminating in the charge that he died a horrible death, recanting in his daughter's arms. We know, however, that Paine's only daughter died in infancy, and that the beliefs he held are those of progressive orthodoxy and of liberalism today. Our simple trust is in truth, a Gibraltar against which the waves of error and superstition dash in vain, and our movement is destined to last if our trust in truth and the power of man to find it abide.

During the past week we have celebrated the birthday of one of the world's great emancipators, whose satires did so much to free the minds of men from foolish fears, who ridiculed and denounced the hypocrycies and shams of his age and heralded the larger freedom of the modern era. It is well for us to remember the heroes in the realm of religion and gratefully to recall the service they rendered, and to cancel in some measure our debt by carrying forward the gospel for which they lived and died.

Notwithstanding Paul's admonition to women to keep silent in public meeting, this movement has extended the courtesy of its platform to women, and this marks a forward step. Let the cause of emancipation go on till there shall be no longer any domain in which freedom to develop is wanting, but everywhere opportunity for self-realization be the privilege of all.

Address of Rev. David Holford.

I am with you body and spirit, and on this, your anniversary, declare my spiritual independence, having cut loose from the grinding dogmas of the Baptist theological mill through which I have been passing for the past twenty years. Freedom of thought and speech is the birthright of every man, but is not to be found in the churches who claim to be the guardians of civil and religious liberty. If a Christian minority has pleaded for religious liberty, a Christian majority never failed to deny it. Ten thousand eulogies have been bestowed upon the church for having, as it is claimed, established religious liberty in this country. But what is the conception of religious liberty as held by the churches? What liberty do they advocate? The liberty to be a Baptist, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Catholic—simply this and nothing more. Let any one member of any of these churches undergo a change of mind in respect to its dogmas and teachings and do no worse than go to one of the other churches, what happens? At once he is regarded by the church he has left as being unstable, unreliable and heretical.

Freedom of thought for any man desiring to become a member of any one of these so-called Christian churches he must of necessity accept its teachings, believe its doctrines and be subject to its discipline. Thus is a man bound and gagged by the dogmas of the church, and yet in face of all this he is said by the church to have his liberty. Friends, this is not liberty—it is slavery. It is not freedom—it is captivity. Think of a man being compelled to accept and believe the doctrine of vicarious atonement, which, of course, he must accept and believe in order to hold membership in any Christian church. The idea that the wrath of a merciful God can only be appeased by the sacrifice of his innocent son! Here is a father with a family of children. All of them are debased villians save one, a bright and noble boy. The father has become so enraged at the conduct of his vicious children that the only way he can become reconciled to them is by having them murder this innocent child. This murder atones for all their crimes. Washed in the blood of their murdered brother, they become pure and holy. By this act they merit and obtain the renewed affection of their parent. Such a doctrine is shocking to every sense of justice, is antagonistic to every principle of morality. Or, if you will, take the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. The church teaches that beyond this life and beyond this world are two localities, called Heaven and Hell. This heaven is a reward, they say. But a reward for what? Good conduct? No. A reward for believing doctrines which no rational human, thinking being can believe.

Hell is a punishment. A punishment for what? For crimes committed? No. For failure to believe what only men who lack intelligence can believe.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark, xvi, 16. What taught the great exponent of Christian doctrines, Paul?

"A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith in Jesus Christ, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."—Gal. i, 16. "To him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—Rom., iv., 5. Therefore we conclude that a

man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (Rom., iii, 28.)

I take to myself some little credit for being able to speak with considerable data upon this subject of Hell. Knowing as I do the absolute impossibility of a literal fire taking hold upon that which is incorporeal and immaterial, burning and tormenting through endless ages, I conclude that Hell is not a locality, but a conditon. Therefore, Hell is in Seattle, as also in every other city, town and village, and my authority for speaking on Hell lies in the fact of my having been there. I therefore bring you a message from Hell: a message that announces this to be my emencipation day, the day of freedom wherein and whereon I declare myself free from all the doctrines, dogmas, teachings and technicalities of the church, and at one with you, whose faith is built on reason, I join hand and heart in effort to perpetuate your Society for Universal Religion.

Address of Alfred W. Martin.

It has been said that for every man who knows more than he tells there are a hundred who tell more than they know. The other ministers of the city would doubtless classify me in that hundred, yet I say only what I know, only what the signs of the times warrant one in saying, when I affirm that the future of religion is bound up with the principles and ideals for which our movement stands. Besides the evidences of this tendency furnished by current literature, the leading novels of the day dealing with the mighty change in theological thought, one may point also to the heresy-trials in various Christian sects, the secessions from the traditional religion which the newspapers report with increasing frequency. Then, again, there is the practice of creed-revision and constitutional amendments exhibited by different denominations of late, notably the Presbyterian and the Unitarian, indicating a forward step in the direction of free, spiritual and universal religion.

Within the past fortnight, and without any solicitation whatever, I have received nine applications from ministers with-

in one or another of the Christian sects, asking for an opportunity to co-operate in the work we have in hand at Tacoma and Seattle. Three of these are Unitarians, two are Baptists, one is Presbyterian, one Methodist, one Episcopalian and one non-descript.

As another striking illustration of the point I am making, take the attempt of Rev. C. F. Dole, the distinguished Unitarian divine, who in company with eight other representative Unitarian ministers sought to broaden the fellowship of this denomination so as to include all such movements as are in sympathy with the liberal spirit and purpose of the Unitarian body. Such are some of the present-day indications of progress in religion which justify the belief that its trend is in the direction of our movement.

Very fitting it is at this anniversary festival to ask what is the nature of our movement in the world of religious thought and effort? It is not a prison in which dogmas are zealously guarded and resolutely maintained. It is not a cold-storage warehouse for the preservation of uncorrupted doctrines. Nor yet, again, is it a gymnasium for the calisthenics of the soul. Rather is it a power-house in which is generated the spiritual energy of a faith that shall move the world, faith in the universe as intelligible, faith in freedom of thought as an essential condition for understanding the universe, faith in reason that when left free it can find answers to the questions that reason has raised, faith in the method of science as the only satisfactory means for solving the open questions of deity, duty and destiny; faith in ethics, and in religion as the "effort of Man to perfect himself in all his relations."

Yet while glorying in this faith let us in all humility and modesty remember that we were not its originators nor the first to proclaim it. To-night be it our grateful joy to call to mind the three great prophets and pioneers in the work to which we have dedicated our souls, Octavius B. Frothingham, orator and popularizer of the gospel of free and universal religion, the man who did for it a service similar to that of Huxley for Darwinism; William J. Potter, the saintly soul, " a very perfect, gentle knight," *sans peur et sans reproche;* Francis E. Abbot, sole sur-

viving member of the illustrious trio; philosopher, poet, preacher, patriot and withal partner in our work and contributor to our success. Be it ours to manifest our gratitude to these heroic predecessors (whose courage and consecration have made it possible for us to organize and propagate the cause to a degree not possible in their generation) not only with our lips, but also with our lives, by carrying forward the message they proclaimed, proving ourselves worthy the heritage they bequeathed by serving the cause with consecration and steadfastness like unto theirs.

No small part of our mission it is to wage a holy war against the sectarian principle, the sectarian spirit, dogmatism and all else that enslaves the soul, but in this battle let us ever hold aloft the white flag of peace, emblem of our faith in the advent of the perfect day when the swords of sectarian rivalry will be beaten into ploughshares to help prepare the soil of humanity for the great harvest of freedom and fellowship in religion. Our privilege it is to look forward into the future and with the poet to exclaim:

"Tread, kingly Gospel, through the nations tread,
With all the noblest virtues in thy train;
Be all to thy blest freedom captive led,
And Truth, the great emancipator, reign."

UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

The annual meeting of the Seattle Society for Universal Religion was held on Sunday evening, January 11, immediately after the evening service. The three trustees whose terms had expired were re-elected, so that the board remains constituted as before: Jacob Furth, president; John Arthur, vice president; R. R. George, treasurer; Thomas Ensminger, secretary; Dr. T. W. Sloan, Griffith Davies, W. F. Epler, Leo Kohn, Richard Osborn. The annual report prepared and read by Vice President Arthur was as follows:

Annual Report.

I am glad to be able to state at this annual meeting that

during the past year the society has been in a highly prosperous condition. It has grown steadily in numbers, and the attendance at its Sunday meetings has attained large proportions. The interest in this free thought movement is manifestly on the increase. Since our last annual meeting the Woman's Union has done excellent work in a variety of ways. It has tended largely to bring about a closer social relation between the members of the society; it has given a good deal of attention to the decoration of our meeting place and to the distribution of our literature throughout the state, and it has been highly successful in managing the social festivals which have been held.

The adult class sessions have been quite interesting. In this connection I would call attention to the prospective additional acommodations (20 by 40 feet) adjoining the regular lecture hall. These accommodations can be utilized to much advantage. Fortnightly Wednesday afternoon meetings for the study of the new catechism which has been prepared for the society, and monthly meetings on Wedneseday afternoon to read "In Memoriam" have been instituted, and have thus far proved quite advantageous.

It is highly important that those who attend the Sunday evening lectures should become better acquainted with each other. This can be accomplished only by their remaining after the close of the services for at least a few moments, renewing the acquaintances already formed and making as many others as practicable. Another feature that deserves especial attention is the desirability of securing an extensive circulation for the monthly magazine published by the society. The reading of this magazine will naturally stimulate interest in the entire movement and strengthen this organization. A society without a literature of its own can hardly grow much. The price of the magazine ($1 per annum) is so low and reasonable as to place it within the reach of everyone who takes an interest in the growth of a liberal movement like this.

It is highly desirable that the financial resources of the society be placed upon a firmer basis. Reliance mainly upon collections at the meetings has proved unsatisfactory. Every effort

should be made to secure regular contributions of given amounts, weekly or monthly as the parties prefer. With this system established, the officers can at any time ascertain what indebtedness they can safely incur and what improvements in our general plan and work they ought to undertake.

Tomorrow night at 8 o'clock the mother society at Tacoma will hold its tenth annual sociable. The practice of sending a number of delegates to attend this festival has already been instituted, and should be carried out in the most liberal manner on this occasion. It is hoped that as large a delegation as possible will be sent from here. The First Free Church of Tacoma recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its institution by an elaborate banquet given at the Tacoma hotel, the proceeds of which enabled the church to pay off some indebtedness that was both burdensome and embarrassing. We heartily congratulate the church on the success of that effort.

The fourth annual festival of this society will be held in this hall on Sunday evening, February 1. It will, of course, be under the intelligent and judicious management of the Woman's Union, thus insuring complete success.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR. R. T. REID.

The following resolutions adopted by the trustees of the First Free Church at their March meeting were unanimously endorsed by the congregation Sunday, March 22. At the same time it was unanimously voted to supplement these resolutions with some suitable symbol as a further expression of the esteem in which Mr. Reid is held. A committee of three was appointed to arrange for the selection of a present and the receiving of subscriptions.

"Whereas, Mr. R. T. Reid, one of the charter members of the First Free Church of Tacoma, who, since the organization of the society in 1892, has been its treasurer, and for several years past has been a trustee, is about to take up his residence in California and sever his active connection with the church;

And, whereas, the trustees of said First Free Church, realiz-

ing that Mr. Reid possesses in a large degree those peculiar gifts and qualities that distinguish the organizer; untiring energy, zeal in the cause he seeks to promote, a ready perception of things necessary to be done combined with a lofty purpose; and that he has freely and willingly expended his energy in behalf of the church, has zealously championed its cause, and has skilfully and adroitly made use of such instruments as came to hand to promote its welfare, and has ever kept in view the lofty purposes of our organization,

And, whereas, the trustees realize that much of the success of the cause we have so much at heart is due to the skilful management of the church's finances by Mr. Reid, to his watchful care over its interests, to the hope and faith he has inspired, and the feeling of confidence his own confidence has begot;

And, whereas, we feel that it is meet and proper that some expression be given to the high regard we have for Mr. Reid and his estimable wife, who has ably seconded all his efforts in behalf of our cause as an active member of the Women's Union and auxiliary societies;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that we deeply feel the loss the church sustains by the departure of Mr. Reid and his wife, that we recognize in him one of its staunchest friends and a most efficient co-laborer, that much of the success of our movement is due to his untiring efforts, his zeal and devotion; that, while we deeply regret the necessities that deprive us of his valued assistance, we yet congratulate him and his upon his advance in position, and that we realize, as only those can who know him intimately, that such advance is but deserved recognition of exceptional talents."

GEORGE BROWNE,
SAMUEL COLLYER.
FRANK D. NASH.
Committee on Resolutions.

THE CONGRESS OF RELIGION ON PUGET SOUND.

Foremost among the national agencies that are working to promote unity, harmony and mutual appreciation among the various religious denominations, stands the Congress of Religion

organized in May, 1894, at Chicago, just after the famous "World's Parliament of Religions." Annually, for nine years, it has held a general session with occasional special sessions. This year the general session was held at Los Angeles, Cal., and among the cities fortunate enough to secure a special session were Tacoma and Seattle. The Free Church, of Tacoma, and the Seattle Society for Universal Religion gave up their regular Sunday services and under their respective auspices arranged for a special session of the Congress. The Tacoma Theater, the auditorium of the First Free Church, was well filled at the morning session with a representative audience, and the "banner" collection taken for the benefit of the Congress demonstrated the deep impression made by Dr. Thomas, the president, and Mr. Jones, the secretary, in their addresses. The evening session at Seattle brought out the "banner" attendance, the large auditorium proving inadequate to hold all who wished to attend. As Dr. Thomas delivered the chief address in the morning, at Tacoma, Mr. Jones had the principal part on the programme in the evening, at Seattle, the former speaking on "The Higher Harmonies" and the latter on "The Common Ground of the Sects." At the morning session Mr. F. K. Gilette and Mr. Martin assisted, and at the evening session Rev. W. D. Simonds, of the Seattle Unitarian Church, and Rabbi T. F. Joseph and Mr. Martin participated in the exercises.

The one hope now held in every heart is that a general session of the Congress may be held on Puget Sound in the near future.

The objects for which the Congress exists are as follows:

To unite in a larger fellowship and co-operation such existing societies as are in sympathy with the movement toward undogmatic religion; to secure a closer and more helpful association of all those in the thought and work of the world, under the great law and life of love; to develop the church of humanity, democratic in organization, progressive in spirit, aiming at the development of pure and high character, hospitable to all forms of thought, cherishing the spiritual traditions and experiences of the past, but keeping itself open to all new light and the higher developments of the future.